

below in clean form. For the convenience of the Examiner, all presently pending claims are also reproduced below. Marked-up copies of the amended claims as required by 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(ii) are provided in the Appendix to this Response.

1. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system for storing substantially flat workpieces after they have been removed from a workpiece storage cassette having been located within a container including a container shell and a container door within an environment that is isolated from ambient conditions, the system comprising:

a load port capable of supporting the container and separating the container door from the container shell in order to provide access to the workpieces supported by the workpiece storage cassette;

a stocker for storing the workpieces after they have been removed from the workpiece storage cassette; and

a workpiece transfer mechanism for removing the workpieces from the workpiece storage cassette and placing the workpieces in said stocker and for transferring the workpieces from said stocker to the workpiece storage cassette.

2. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker stores the workpieces in a substantially vertical orientation.

3. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and six.

4. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and eight.

5. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and twelve.

6. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker may be stored remotely from the workpiece management system.

7. (Twice Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stocker may be used for bulk transport of reticles away from the workpiece management system.

8. (Twice Amended) A reticle management system for storing individual reticles after the reticles have been removed from a reticle holding cassette located within a SMIF pod having a pod shell and a pod door, the system comprising:

a load port assembly [being] capable of supporting the SMIF pod and separating the pod door from the pod shell to provide access to the reticles supported by the reticle holding cassette;

a reticle stocker capable of storing a plurality of individual reticles that have been removed from the cassette, said reticle stocker including:

a rotatable central shaft;

a plurality of annular carousels coaxially aligned with and secured to said rotatable central shaft, each said annular carousel having multiple substantially radially oriented slots extending outward from said rotatable central shaft such that each said slot is capable of storing an individual reticle in a substantially vertical orientation; and

a fan filter unit being adapted to circulate clean air by the reticles seated in each said slot; and

a reticle transfer mechanism for transferring reticles between said slots and the reticle holding cassette.

9. (Previously Canceled)

10. (Twice Amended) A reticle management system as recited in claim 8, wherein said reticle stocker may be stored remotely from the reticle management system.

11. (Twice Amended) A reticle management system as recited in claim 8, wherein said reticle stocker may be used for bulk transport of reticles away from the reticle management system.